



To attract diverse talent, you need to show candidates that you value diversity first. LinkedIn Says These 4 Tactics Will Help Attract Diverse Talent

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The cat is out of the bag, diversity is a huge competitive advantage. Organizations that focus on building a diverse and inclusive culture are more productive, more innovative, and drive higher levels of employee engagement.

But where do you start? Hitting the road to recruit with an affirmative action mindset won't cut it. Before you can attract and retain a diverse workforce, you have to make sure that your culture will support it first.

Last summer, I started the conversation by focusing on five strategies organizations could follow to foster diversity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging at work. It is critical that you work on your culture first to ensure its representative and receptive to diversity--or you'll never sustain it. The five pieces of advice backed by LinkedIn research included:

- Foster an environment that represents differing opinions
- Encourage people to be themselves at work
- Have leaders acknowledge the importance of diversity
- Embed diversity into company mission and values
- Emphasize diversity of the leadership team

Once you've addressed these aspects of your culture, then recruiting diverse talent gets easier. To help you narrow in on effective strategies, LinkedIn surveyed over 8,000 hiring authorities (recruiters and hiring managers) and identified the top four tactics organizations are using to show candidates that they value diversity. I've added my personal experience to each.

1. Use diverse employees in web and print materials

It's easy to get so caught up in design elements, that you overlook the subliminal messages that your marketing and recruiting materials send. Depending upon the colors, photos, and copy, for example, it could be inferred that your organization is male-dominated, only for millennials, or lacks racial and ethnical diversity.

A good rule of thumb to follow is to ensure that your recruiting collateral represents the diverse workforce that you want to attract. At the end of the day, people are drawn to companies that look like they do.

2. Present diverse interview panels

The knee-jerk reaction when selecting interview panels is to rely on those with the most senior titles in the department. However, when you take a look at the numbers, the odds that you present a diverse workforce aren't great--especially when considering gender.

- According to a recent McKinsey report, women only hold only 34 percent of the Sr. Manager/Director roles, 30 percent of the VP roles, and 23 percent of the C-Suite roles in corporate America. This is more alarming given the US labor force is nearing a fifty/fifty split between woman and men.
- Among the top 100 venture capitalist firms, only eight percent of partners are women.

When you introduce additional factors like race, the numbers are even lower.

Make a point to create diverse interviewing panels that represent the world we live in (different genders, ages, races, and professional backgrounds). Not only does it showcase your diverse workforce, but also the diversity of thought. Having more perspectives in the room increases the likelihood that candidates connect to and relate to your organization. If you want to recruit diverse candidates, involve diverse team members in the recruitment process.

3. Talk about employee resource groups (ERGs)

Employee resource groups can also go by the name of affinity groups, business network groups, or interest groups. Regardless of what you call them, ERGs are a great tool for fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace. For example, many organizations leverage ERGs to:

- Provide employees with a platform to be heard, valued and engaged
- Come up with ideas to help the company reflect the diversity and demographics of their customer base
- Help new employees feel more comfortable and socialized during the onboarding process

ERGs are inexpensive to start, and their impact on employee morale, customer experience, and culture are often profound.

4. Recruit at schools with diverse student bodies

As a recruiter who has spent the last half-decade at career fairs, I can tell you that it's a difficult vehicle for recruiting diverse talent. Unless you are intentional about attending schools, fairs, or student-run clubs that are diverse, it's easy for your organization's location or industry to pigeonhole you.

To combat perception, make sure your organization is sending company representatives that model the diverse workforce you're trying to attract and that you're making a calculated effort to get in front of various groups of students. It bears repeating: If you want to recruit diverse candidates, involve diverse team members in the recruitment process.

Once you've created a culture that models your beliefs on the importance of diversity, these four strategies are a great first step towards attracting and recruiting diverse talent to your organization.